

# **Evaluation of the Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored Charter Schools**

## **The Excel Center Fourth-year Charter Review**

**2013-2014 School Year**

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# OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION

## Office of the Mayor of Indianapolis FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

### *The Excel Center*

October 29 –November 22, 2013

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The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Fourth Year Charter Review (FYCR) is designed to assess the fourth year of the school as it fully implements the policies and procedures developed in the previous academic years. The Fourth Year Charter Review Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as school-based goals.

***Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:***

#### ***Is the educational program a success?***

- 1.1. *Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?*
- 1.2. *Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth model?*
- 1.3. *Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?*
- 1.4. *Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?*
- 1.5. *Is the school's attendance rate strong?*
- 1.6. *Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.7. *Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

#### ***Is the organization in sound fiscal health?***

- 2.1. *Short term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?*
- 2.2. *Long term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?*
- 2.3. *Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?*

#### ***Is the organization effective and well-run?***

- 3.1. *Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?*
- 3.2. *Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.3. *Is the school's board active, knowledgeable and abiding by appropriate policies, systems and processes in its oversight?*
- 3.4. *Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?*
- 3.5. *Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations and provision of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?*

*Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

- 4.1. *Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?*
- 4.2. *Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?*
- 4.3. *For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?*
- 4.4. *Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?*
- 4.5. *Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?*
- 4.6. *Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?*
- 4.7. *Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?*
- 4.8. *Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?*
- 4.9. *Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?*
- 4.10. *Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?*

COMPLETION OF THE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office authorized Research & Evaluation Resources (RER) to conduct site visits of schools in their fourth year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. This report uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: *Responses to sub-questions 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 of Core Question 4.*

The outcome of this review will provide the school with written a report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators<sup>1</sup> developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

*Does not meet standard*

*Approaching standard*

*Meets standard*

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<sup>1</sup> Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

## **Background and History of The Excel Center**

The charter application submitted by The Excel Center stated as the mission of the school:

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their education by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

The Excel Center opened its original campus on Michigan Street in the late summer of 2010 and easily met the predicted initial enrollment of 200 students. There has been a waiting list for positions at The Excel Center since its opening day and the initial successes of the original Michigan Street location led to the opening of two new campuses in the 2011-2012 school year—one in the Meadows neighborhood on the near east side, and another in Decatur Township on the west side of Indianapolis. These campuses were quickly followed by Franklin Road, Anderson, Kokomo, Lafayette, Richmond, and another Indianapolis location on the city’s west side.

The school specific goals proposed for The Excel Center are motivated by the philosophy of “relationships, relevance, and rigor.” These same “three R’s” are also the focus of the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, which is also managed by the Goodwill Education Initiatives. The original curriculum of The Excel Center was an online curriculum delivered through A+nywhere Learning System, which was available to students at all times. All students were given netbooks and progressed through learning modules that were designed to teach content aligned to Indiana Academic Standards. Licensed teachers validated the content of this material and assessed students’ mastery of the coursework. Students were able to contact staff through e-mail and instant messaging during the school’s operating hours. Students progressed through on-line material at their own pace and covered only the material that is relevant to their own personal learning plan.

While this original vision of curriculum delivery achieved some success in student achievement data, and input from the students themselves, led to the conclusion that a more traditional schedule of classes would provide students with the structure to enable them to move more rapidly through their coursework. Specifically, the leadership at The Excel Center noted that many of their students were either unemployed or underemployed and had the flexibility to take a full set of classes during the day, and that when a more structured schedule was in place the students responded by working more steadily toward their degree. To that end, the leadership at The Excel Center modified their curriculum to include 8-week courses that met for up to three hours per class, four days per week. While the online curriculum remains for those students who wish to use it, the majority of Excel Center students take their courses on the 8-week schedule.

While the structure of the curriculum has undergone dramatic changes, the underlying philosophy of The Excel Center has not changed and is still based on the three “R’s:” relationships, relevance and rigor as described in The Excel Center’s charter application:

- Students in The Excel Center will develop supportive **relationships** with staff and fellow students to encourage their progress and academic engagement. They will be grouped into teams that meet bi-weekly to support each other, debrief challenges of balancing school and life concerns, and celebrate learning achievements and milestones. In addition, Excel Center coaches will facilitate these teams and meet with students to promote their continued education. These coaches will monitor progress, and where necessary, work with students to find solutions to particular life challenges that might hinder student progress.
- Students’ education will be **relevant** to their educational and career goals. Every student will develop an individual learning plan based upon his or her unique interests and abilities. The Excel Center will provide students the opportunity to connect the material they learn to skills that are helpful and necessary in work environments. Remedial and basic high school coursework will be balanced with tangible skills training that focuses on improving students’ employability. Students will enroll in local post-secondary institutions and take the first steps towards earning some form of post-secondary degree or credential. Students – many of whom will be first-time college students – will benefit from The Excel Center’s support and encouragement as they learn to navigate and succeed in post-secondary learning environments.
- The **rigor** of The Excel Center coursework is designed to prepare students to graduate from high school and be prepared for post-secondary learning environments. Students who participate in The Excel Center will complete all requirements of one of the recognized State of Indiana high school diplomas. In addition, students will prepare for and demonstrate skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education.

#### *Additional Student Supports*

In addition to providing academic and life skills supports, The Excel Center also offers students assistance with managing their educational goals while fulfilling the needs of their families and themselves. Specifically, The Excel Center provides:

- A Learning Well health clinic for all students is provided by The Marion County Health Department. Students can receive health screenings and treatment for health concerns. A Learning Well nurse is physically present in school administrative offices to meet students for appointments during the school day.
- Goodwill Education Initiatives operates a food pantry where students and their families can pick up food, personal hygiene items and other staple goods. Students can use these resources to meet short-term needs if food security is a barrier to student success.

- Cummins Behavioral Health provides students with comprehensive mental health services. GEI contracts with Cummins to provide these assessment and treatment services for any students in need of additional health supports.
- The Excel Center provides a resource area that is open six days a week, beginning as early as 7am and closing as late as 10pm. The room is staffed by licensed teachers, resource staff and volunteers to answer students' questions and provide one-on-one instruction.
- The Excel Center provides a daycare center for the children of students currently working toward their degree.

### **The Four Campuses of The Excel Center authorized by the Office of Education Innovation**

The success of the original Excel Center program at the Michigan Street location has led to the expansion of The Excel Center into three more locations that are authorized by the Office of Education Innovation: Meadows Street, Decatur Blvd. and Franklin Road. Each campus has its own distinct identity, despite being part of a very cohesive system. The Michigan Street campus is the original site of the first Excel Center. The students attending the Michigan Street location range from teenagers to grandmothers, and are from the neighborhoods adjacent to the Goodwill campus where The Excel Center is located. The Meadows Street location closely resembles the Michigan Street location but appears to be drawing a somewhat younger demographic from the near-eastside neighborhoods where The Excel Center-Meadows campus is located. The Excel Center on Decatur Blvd. educates a unique population among the four campuses, drawing heavily from the Burmese immigrant population in Indianapolis. The Decatur Blvd. campus has a multi-ethnic population of students, many of whom do not speak English. The campus has been modified to accommodate these students, with translators being provided and prayer rooms being provided for the Muslim students. The Franklin Road location is located on the east side of Indianapolis in the former Stonegate Early College High School. Franklin Road draws students from across the city who are drawn to the strong college preparatory focus of this campus, as well as for the friendly and welcoming staff.

### **The Excel Center Method**

***The Curriculum.*** Based on experiences in the first year of operation at the Michigan Street location, the curriculum of The Excel Center was dramatically changed from a focus on individual learners using online curriculum, to more structured 8-week long courses that include direct instruction, group work and independent projects. These 8-week courses offer accelerated coursework and allow students to complete anywhere from 4 to 16 credits in one 8-week session. In addition to the more traditional courses such as Algebra I and English 10, The Excel Center staff has designed hybrid, cross-discipline courses, such as American Studies and World Studies that address several of the requirements for a Core 40 diploma.

*iExcel.* The iExcel program is an intensive orientation and matriculation process that has been implemented since the 2011-12 academic year. The iExcel program incorporates traditional orientation activities such as course selection, standardized testing and academic counseling, with a unique set of activities designed to give the teaching staff the opportunity to get to know each student as an individual and to allow the students to get acquainted with their classmates. iExcel, which occurs over two days, also gives The Excel Center staff the opportunity to impress upon prospective students the amount of work required and the commitment necessary to succeed at The Excel Center.

*Life Coaches.* The Life Coaches provide essential support for students by removing roadblocks to academic progress through counseling, social support and everyday advice on topics as diverse as transportation, finding safe housing, childcare, and healthy diet. In addition to these vital services, the Life Coaches also play a substantial role in the academic life of the students. The Life Coaches meet regularly with the teaching staff and are important partners with the teaching staff to the benefit of the students.

## **The Evaluation Process**

This report represents an evaluation about performance in each of the standards and indicators that are the responsibility of RER to evaluate. These indicators: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 are outlined in the Performance Framework.

Research & Evaluation Resources staff engaged in a number of evidence-collecting activities. The focus of this evaluation was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of the evaluation. RER conducted focus group discussions with students, staff, and parents, as well as interviews with the school administration. These focus groups and interviews were conducted at the four different campuses over a one month period, with the review of the Meadows campus taking place on October 29 & 30, 2013, at the Franklin St. location on October 31 & November 1, 2013, at the Decatur Blvd. location on November 5 & 6, 2013, and the Michigan Street Location on November 11, 12, & 22, 2013. Dr. Schauna Findlay, Chief Academic Officer for Goodwill Education Initiatives was interviewed on November 14, 2013, Ms. Betsy Delgado, Executive Director, was interviewed on November 13, 2013, and Mr. Scott Bess, Chief Operating Officer of Goodwill Education Initiatives, was interviewed on November 14, 2013. Additional interviews with ESL staff at the four locations were conducted on December 19 & 20, 2013. Classroom observations were performed on site at each of the four campuses using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and the majority of the teaching staff was observed once.

In the following report, standards and indicators are listed with relevant evidence given related to the performance criteria. Following the discussion of each indicator, a summary of strengths and areas for attention are provided for the core question. The Excel Center sites each operate with a remarkable degree of autonomy; however, there are aspects of their operations that are the responsibility of Goodwill Educational Initiatives. In recognition of this arrangement, Standards 4.1,

4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 will be evaluated at the level of GEI and the supports it provides to The Excel Center sites, while standards 4.2, 4.7, 4.9 and 4.10 will be evaluated individually for the each of the four Excel Center locations.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### THE EXCEL CENTERS

<i>Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?</i>	N/A
<i>Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?</i>	N/A
<i>Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?</i>	N/A
<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	Finding
4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	Meets Standard
<b>Meadows</b>	
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Meets Standard
<b>Franklin Road</b>	
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Approaching Standard
<b>Decatur Boulevard</b>	
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Approaching Standard
<b>Michigan Street</b>	
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Approaching Standard
4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?	Meets Standard
4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	Meets Standard
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	Approaching Standard
4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	Meets Standard
<b>Meadows</b>	
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	Meets Standard
<b>Franklin Road</b>	
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	Meets Standard
<b>Decatur Boulevard</b>	
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	Meets Standard
<b>Michigan Street</b>	
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	Meets Standard
4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	Not Applicable
4.9 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?	Meets Standard
<b>Meadows</b>	
4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?	Not Applicable
<b>Franklin Road</b>	
4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?	Meets Standard
<b>Decatur Boulevard</b>	
4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?	Meets Standard
<b>Michigan Street</b>	
4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?	Meets Standard

## Standard 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	<b>The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.</b>

The curriculum at The Excel Centers is actively adapted to the needs of the student population at each of the diverse campuses. The curriculum is common across all Excel Center campuses, with the core learning objectives for each course and the basic objectives designed collaboratively with the teaching staff and leadership from all campuses participating. The majority of this work was done in the summer of 2011, prior to the change in curriculum being fully implemented and the two new campuses opening. The curriculum has continued to be improved and refined through a collaborative process that is overseen by Dr. Schauna Findlay, Chief Academic Officer for Goodwill Education Initiatives, and includes a team of lead teachers from each of The Excel Center locations. An examination of the curriculum maps revealed that these courses are aligned to the Indiana State Standards, and in many courses, to the Common Core standards as well (indicator a). The leadership at Goodwill Education Initiatives, as well as the Directors at each campus, encourages the teaching staff to adapt the curriculum maps to the needs of their students. During focus group interviews at each site, the teaching staff reported that they felt comfortable adjusting the scope and sequencing of the content to ensure that their students' needs are met, saying, "We are free to do what we need to do to make this work for our students." Another teacher noted, "we have a large role in how the courses are designed and implemented... if needed, we are making changes and redesigning the curriculum. Last summer we redefined and identified benchmarks in the American Studies curriculum... The curriculum was teacher driven." Additionally, "the people who worked on the curriculum were the people teaching the class." They further noted that they work closely with other members of the teaching staff to ensure that material that may not be covered in depth in one

course will be covered in subsequent courses. All of the teaching staff reported a focus on ensuring that the material was presented in time for testing (indicator c), with End-of-Course assessment being a particular focus. In those classes that conclude with ECA tests (Algebra I, Biology, and English 10), the curriculum maps are designed to present the information in time for testing, as well as giving the students the skills needed to pass these assessments. Excel leadership has noted that many of their students are unfamiliar with the format of the ECA's and also with the computerized administration of the exam. Consequently, the teaching staff makes it a priority to present information in the same formats that will appear on the ECA's in order to familiarize the students with the types of questions they will encounter on the test, and there is a focus on ensuring that the appropriate content is covered. Each campus offers after school tutoring in both content and test taking strategies.

A systematic review of The Excel Center curriculum is performed on a regular basis, with a particular focus placed on student performance on End-of-Course Assessments (indicator b). Student assessment data from all of The Excel Center sites is aggregated and examined for gaps in student knowledge and performance. This data includes student performance on the End-of-Course Assessments, as well as the data from the common assessments used across The Excel Center sites. This data is examined with the goal of providing information specific to each site, as well as for weaknesses and strengths with the curriculum as a whole. For example, it was noted that across all sites many students were struggling to comprehend complex texts and were often missing the meaning of the texts they were reading. Based on this data, additional supports for complex texts were added to the overall curriculum, and professional development in the Reading Apprenticeship model has been an on-going focus.

Examination of the curriculum documents provided by The Excel Center revealed that the curriculum has clearly prioritized core-learning objectives, and that the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas is logical and cohesive (indicator d). The curriculum of The Excel Center undergoes rigorous review and revision on a frequent basis to ensure that the instruction is focused on core learning objectives and that the assessments used to determine student knowledge are accurate. Dr. Findlay and lead teachers regularly engage in a process of developing assessments, ensuring that those assessments are aligned to the curricular content, while also checking for alignment to the appropriate educational standards. Dr. Findlay and The Excel Centers staff will work course by course comparing questions from the common final exams given at all Excel Center sites, as well as questions for the ECA's, to the curriculum maps and to the skills they are designed to assess. Each question is projected on a white board and then deconstructed for the skill being tested, the standard addressed and the knowledge needed to answer it correctly. In this way, alignment to standards, quality of assessment and core-learning objectives are all aligned.

The staff at all campuses regularly uses curriculum documents and related materials to effectively deliver instruction (indicator e). The Excel Center curriculum combines a focus on accelerated credit recovery, ECA preparation, with an additional school-wide focus on life skills and job placement. The Excel Center leadership and staff have designed a comprehensive program to deliver quality instruction while also removing barriers that may cause the students to stop their education. The

faculty at each site are given some freedom to modify the individual lesson plans that instantiate the curriculum; however, the teaching staff must maintain the accelerated pace of instruction needed to finish the course in eight weeks, and they must include all the skills and knowledge needed to pass a series of common assessments. These assessments were designed to incorporate the core learning objectives for that course, and cannot be modified by the teaching staff. This arrangement ensures that the teaching staff takes full advantage of the curriculum documents provided by The Excel Center, while still giving them the freedom to use related program materials of their own choosing to differentiate their instruction for the students in their class.

Site visits to all four campuses revealed that there are sufficient materials in the classrooms to deliver the curriculum effectively (indicator f). The classrooms at all four sites were modern and well-lit, there were computer labs available for the students to use, as well as computers in most classrooms. Focus group interviews at all four sites did not reveal faculty concerns regarding curricular or other materials.

*Areas of Strength:* The curriculum designed by the staff and leadership of The Excel Center is of very high quality and fulfills the unique needs of the staff and students. The combination of a common curricular core, with the flexibility given to the instructional staff to modify the lessons to meet the needs of their students has proven to be very successful.

The process used to align content, skills and standards through the deconstructing of assessment questions is innovative and effective.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

## Meadows

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.</b>

Classroom observations of six classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 6 out of 6) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms. Classroom objectives were clearly posted in all of the classrooms observed, and an examination of the lesson plans provided clearly showed core objectives for the lesson, either in the form of objectives or “students will be able to” (SWBAT’s). The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in all of the classes in which it was applicable (5 out of 6) (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in 4 out of 6 classes (indicator d). The teaching staff reported that they received sufficient feedback on instructional practices (indicator e), noting that they received consistent feedback from peers. Regarding the RISE system, they noted that they were given good feedback after classroom observations were performed by The Excel Center leadership, and that formal observations would begin next semester. It was stated that the teaching staff fully understand the RISE system, having covered it during professional development. Additionally, a different domain within the RISE system was being covered during the Friday professional development sessions, with the leadership team going over the indicators for that domain in detail. Finally, the School Director at the Meadows Street site, Mr. Brent Freeman, noted that they collect lesson plans on a weekly basis and the school directors examine the lesson plans to be sure that they meet the learning goals of the overall curriculum maps being used by all four Excel Center sites.

*Areas of Strength:* The quality of instruction was uniformly high, with a commendable focus on core learning objectives seen in the classroom.

*Recommendations:* Additional opportunities to improve the use of differentiated instruction would benefit both staff and students.

## Franklin Road

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
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Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

Classroom observations of six classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 6 out of 6) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered or were clearly posted in 50% (3 out of 6) of classrooms (indicator b). The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in only 66% (4 out of 6) of the classes (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in 83% of the classes (indicator d). The teaching staff reported that they received sufficient feedback on instructional practices (indicator e), noting that they were comfortable with the RISE system and the professional development opportunities implemented to help them learn about RISE. They also noted weekly professional development ensuring that they understand the RISE system and how it is applied to their practices.

*Areas of Strength:* The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

*Recommendations:* More focus on providing the appropriate pacing and rigor in the classroom would benefit the students.

A greater focus on core learning objectives would improve the quality of instruction.

## Decatur Boulevard

<b>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>The school presents significant concerns in <u>one of the following areas:</u> a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.</b>
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

Classroom observations of four classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 4 out of 4) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms (indicator b). Classroom objectives were clearly posted in 3 of the 4 classrooms observed. The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in only one of the 4 classes observed (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in only two of the four observed classes (indicator d). In response to the noted lack of differentiation in the classroom, Mr. Ladd, noted that the staff at The Excel Center-Decatur has been focusing their profession development on acquiring the skills necessary to educate their student population, with a strong focus on special education and English as a Second Language students. Mr. Ladd and his leadership team have adjusted the class schedules to allow the special education teacher of record, and the ESL staff to have more time to develop their differentiation skills. They have also been focusing on providing better instruction and differentiation to the ESL students through the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), with Indiana Department of Education staff providing a day of professional development. Mr. Ladd has said that increasing the use of differentiation is a school-wide goal. The teaching staff reported that they were knowledgeable in the RISE evaluation system, and noted that their professional development included covering the domains of the RISE system (indicator e). Mr. Ladd reports that they now schedule bi-weekly one-on-ones with the teaching staff, and that he tries to connect with the staff on a daily basis.

*Areas of Strength:* The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

*Recommendations:* More focus on providing the appropriate pacing and rigor in the classroom would benefit the students and improve overall instruction.

The majority of the classrooms instructors observed were using direct instruction, and there was very little differentiation for different learning styles noted. Given that the student population at The Excel Center is very diverse, it is critically important that the teaching staff differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of their students.

## Michigan Street

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.</b>
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

Classroom observations of four classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 6 out of 6) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms (indicator b). Classroom objectives were clearly posted in 6 of the 6 classrooms observed. The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in only one of the 6 classes observed (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in all of the observed classes (indicator d). The teaching staff reports that they are evaluated at least four times a year, and that these evaluations are part of the RISE system. They expressed satisfaction with the RISE teacher evaluation system and also with their understanding of the system (indicator e).

*Areas of Strength:* The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

*Recommendations:* More focus on providing the appropriate pacing and rigor in the classroom would benefit the students and improve classroom instruction.

<b>4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</b>	
<b>Does not meet standard</b>	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
<b>Approaching standard</b>	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.</b>

The common curriculum shared across the four Excel Center sites meets or exceeds the Core 40 graduation requirements, and students are encouraged to excel and move ahead in their goal of attaining a high school diploma (indicator e).

The focus on post-secondary opportunities at The Excel Centers includes job placement, technical or associates degrees, or attending community or 4-year colleges. The Excel Centers have made great progress in providing opportunities for their students to achieve certifications in career areas that are currently showing growth in job opportunities. Currently, Excel Center students have the opportunity to complete certification programs in Forklift Operation, Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nurse's Assistant, Early Childhood, CompTIA A+, Safety and Manufacturing Logistics, and Hire Technology (through Conexus). All of these certifications are offered at no cost to the students, with the cost of the programs (some up to \$1,500 per student) either waived by the certification providers, paid for by the Department of Workforce Development, or covered through donations from The Excel Center stakeholders. In addition to the certifications requiring challenging coursework, students are also encouraged to pursue high-level college coursework through the A+ system (indicators a & d). In addition to the valuable certifications, The Excel Centers are working toward providing students with opportunities for internships at local businesses. The Excel Center at Meadows Street is leading the way in this initiative, working with the YMCA to successfully place Excel Center students with internships at the YMCA Meadows location. Students earning certifications in logistics also complete internships in the Goodwill warehouses.

The Excel Centers all have high expectations for their students in regard to post-secondary academic and vocational opportunities (indicator b). The Life Coaches teach a course in college readiness that all graduating students are required to take. The college readiness course differs slightly from each site, but included in the course is resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, post-secondary planning and preparation, and professional dress and behavior.

In addition to providing Excel students with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and professional certification, the four Excel Centers are now offering their students education in the “soft skills” that they may lack. Many Excel Center students have benefitted from this new focus on the skills needed to interview successfully, behave professionally, and retain a job once employed. One of the tools used to determine students’ soft skills is the Professional & Interpersonal Competencies Assessment (PICA), a rubric for evaluating students based on characteristics such as “grit,” “adaptability,” “Emotional Intelligence,” as well as attendance and goal setting, with a member of the staff who knows the student well assigning the scores. The scale used runs from 0 (Never) to 3 (Always) on items such as “Grit: persistently working towards completion of goals in spite of obstacles, difficulties or discouragement.” The information from the PICA is always shared with the student and is often used as a jumping off point for discussions of the student’s readiness for the transition between the Life Coaches and the College and Career (or Grad) Coaches. At the Meadows and Franklin Street locations, this transition is considered a rite of passage for students and signals a transition from a focus on developing life skills to that of developing professional and academic skills. The transition at these schools also includes the development of “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic goals, set in a specific Time Frame) goals. Students are also required to participate in mock job interviews, complete the Character Report Card, which is similar to the PICA but is a self-assessment, and at Franklin Road, the student must give a Powerpoint presentation in front of The Excel Center staff. Grad Coaches also work with the students to introduce them to the Goodwill Guides, who will be providing them with support after they leave The Excel Centers and enter the workforce.

The added focus on soft skills and professional growth seen at the Franklin Street and Meadows site is, to a lesser extent, being replicated at the Michigan Street and Decatur Blvd. locations. The effort to provide the same high level of services at these two locations is, however, being hampered by staffing constraints. Specifically, at the Michigan Street site one staff member provides both college and career guidance to students, and having had experience in career advising, she is working to gain the knowledge needed to provide college and higher education counseling to students. At the Decatur Blvd. site, there has been a cut in the number of coaches overall, and the coaching staff is not adequate to provide both Life Coaches and Grad Coaches. Mr. Chad Grosz, Career Pathways Specialist at Decatur Boulevard, has been instrumental in arranging many of the certifications across all of The Excel Center campuses, in addition to his duties at Decatur, and has a very full schedule.

As noted above, The Excel Centers at the Franklin and Meadows sites have adequate staff and materials to inform students of post-secondary options, while Michigan Street and Decatur are understaffed in this area (indicator c). The Life Coaches do provide information to students regarding their options after graduation, and the addition of the College/Careers positions has strengthened an already good system. The support for The Excel Center students provided by the College/Career Coaches is added to by the work of Tierree Smith, Director of Alumni Relations for The Excel Centers and the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School. Ms. Smith has extensive experience in higher education, having served as an admissions officer in the past. Ms. Smith provides support to Excel Center graduates far above what is offered by traditional high school. Ms. Smith remains in communication with Excel Center graduates who have been accepted to college

and ensures that they understand their financial aid options, as well as helps them choose courses. Ms. Smith also keeps in touch with students during their studies, making sure that they are doing well, or will help them transfer to another college or university if the current school is not a good fit. Ms. Smith goes above and beyond to support The Excel Center graduates and help them to succeed.

Because of the unique nature of The Excel Center students, there is very little attention paid to extra-curricular activities such as athletics and clubs, and for the demographic groups currently being educated at the Michigan Street site, a pressing need for extracurricular activities was not expressed by the students or noted by the staff (indicator d). The Excel Center does provide activities that relate to college and career success, such as campus trips to local universities and colleges, career fairs, and family-oriented social events hosted by The Excel Center sites.

*Areas of Strength:* The staff at all four The Excel Center sites are helpful and supportive of the students achieving their goal of earning a high school diploma, and equally important, the staff encourages the students to set ambitious goals for their lives after they have their diploma.

*Recommendations:* Career-counseling resources at the Decatur and Meadows sites need to be increased and expanded to provide more information on higher education.

<b>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</b>	
<b>Does not meet standard</b>	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
<b>Approaching standard</b>	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.</b>

The Excel Center effectively uses standardized assessments throughout a student's education. The TABE standardized assessment is administered to each student during the iExcel orientation process, and that data is used to design a remediation plan (if necessary) and the student's course schedule. There is an effective focus on the End-of-Course Assessments, and if students are required to take or retake the test the data from their previous testing is used to better prepare them for the ECA. These results are shared with both the teaching and coaching staff and are provided in time to be useful in planning the best educational course for each individual student (indicator b). Additionally, each Excel Center site has access to data that is reflective of their student population. This data is used to ensure that the academic needs of each individual student are being met. As one Lead Teacher noted "we use SRI reading, TABE... any information we can get to schedule and place students based on their needs.... Throughout the term we track them on attendance and data on Harmony. We have also designed our own way of tracking using Google documents to prepare the data for our weekly data meetings." Each site uses the online data tracking tools, either Harmony or GoogleDocs (or both) to track students on a variety of variables. As one classroom instructor noted "we are drowning in data."

In addition to using standardized testing data, summative assessments based on the common Excel Center curriculum are administered by all classroom instructors. Classroom instructors design their own ongoing assessments and exams that are given with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions (indicator d). Further, each course assesses students' knowledge of the course objectives and standards using a common final exam that is administered at all of The Excel Center sites.

These final exams are written by the staff teaching in each course area across all The Excel Center sites and are based upon the core learning objectives and goals that are laid out in the common curriculum map. The process of examining test items described in Standard 4.1 also serves to ensure that assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards (indicator a). The exams are reviewed and updated as needed, with any revisions to the exams, or to the courses themselves, reviewed by Dr. Findlay. According to Dr. Findlay, the results of the exams are used to inform curricular adjustments at each Excel Center site, as well as in the curriculum being implemented across all sites. The teaching staff meets periodically on Fridays to examine student data and to review the current curriculum. If several of the teaching staff notes the same trend in the data, an adjustment is made to the system-wide curriculum map and that revised curriculum map is sent to all the teaching staff teaching that course (indicator e). This process is well designed and is particularly important to the success of The Excel Center. This curricular revision based on student data appears to be an ongoing process at The Excel Center and allows for the flexibility needed to maintain the responsiveness of the curriculum.

In addition to the written exams administered as part of the overall course curriculum, the teaching staff reported that they were encouraged to use a variety of assessments, such as exit tickets and informal immediate assessments, such as “thumbs up” when a student understood the concept, to do real time assessments (indicator c). The informal and formal assessment data collected by the classroom instructors is also used to adjust the pacing of the curriculum for both individual classes and across classes in common subject areas (indicator e).

*Areas of Strength:* Assessment results at The Excel Center are used to revise the curriculum in a very responsive and effective fashion. The system currently in place allows for flexibility in curriculum based on student data, but also ensures that there is a framework in place to provide a quality curriculum.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

<b>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.</b>
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

All teachers at all four sites of The Excel Center are certified or credentialed in their teaching area, or have the appropriate licensure to teach. The teachers are teaching a course load that is manageable, and the various staff members have distinct roles (indicator b). The teachers are all teaching in areas in which they are certified (indicator c). Overall, the staff is deployed to best utilize their skills and training. The Excel Centers have experienced substantial growth over the past two years, and to their credit, many of the new leadership positions at the new Excel Center sites have been filled by promoting from within the ranks of the talented teaching and coaching staff at the four more established Excel Centers. This practice has allowed the new sites to hit their stride quickly, but has left the more established sites with positions open while replacements are found and new staff that need time to learn the policies and procedures of The Excel Centers once they are hired. Additionally, there have been budget driven decreases in staffing that have led to some positions not being filled and the remaining staff left short-handed (indicator b). The loss of staff was unavoidable, and the principals had a role in deciding which positions were replaced and which were left open, but the effects of the unfilled positions have been felt by the remaining staff. As one staff member noted “they (the staff) continues to do more than they think they can—they have lot on their plate, and they do it—they get it done.” It was also noted that the staff believed that Excel Center leadership at Goodwill “they don’t realize what has been asked of this staff and what we have done... I’m not sure if leadership knows what is going on here.”

The Decatur location has been particularly affected, with the coaching staff being significantly short-handed. This current shortfall is temporary and will be alleviated when one of the coaching positions that is currently half time returns to full time. For the moment, to ensure that each student has a coach, the teaching staff has taken on additional duties and many teachers are serving as both instructor and coach. This arrangement has been working for the time being; however, it is not an ideal arrangement due to the possibility of conflicts of interest between a staff member's role as classroom instructor and their role as coach. The leadership at Goodwill Educational Initiatives and on site in Decatur is aware of this potential conflict and is working to take steps to protect both the student and the teacher/coach.

The student population at The Excel Center sites represents a wide diversity of age, socio-economic background, ethnicities and cultures. Further, the 8-week courses, the interdisciplinary teaching, and the close relationships that develop between the students, coaches, and teaching staff means that the hiring process is crucial for The Excel Center. To that end, a great deal of time and effort was spent in the 2010-2011 school year to develop an effective hiring process for The Excel Center. The process developed utilized a protocol developed in collaboration with the Employee and Organizational Development Department from Goodwill Industries. The initial applications are sent to the Goodwill EOD, who then forwards to The Excel Center leadership teacher candidates from the pool of applicants. An onsite interview protocol that includes representatives from the teaching and coaching staff, in addition to the school leadership team, is then implemented. This process has continued to be extremely successful and has led to The Excel Centers to hire extremely talented and dedicated faculty and support staff. The success of the hiring processes is particularly evident in the quality of the staff members that have been promoted to leadership positions across the nine Excel Center sites.

The professional development provided by The Excel Center has adapted and grown as the needs of The Excel Centers have changed. Professional development for the teaching staff at all of The Excel Center sites occurs during regular meetings across all the sites. During focus group interviews the teachers described a series of professional development opportunities that ranged from The Excel Center conference that included all staff and leadership from The Excel Center sites gathering to discuss best-practices in adult education and credit recovery, to Friday afternoon meetings at each site attended by the teaching and coaching staff where individual student needs are discussed. The teaching staff reported that they found all the professional development activities provided by The Excel Centers to be valuable and to move them forward professionally. In addition to the opportunities afforded by The Excel Center conference, there are also opportunities for the teaching staff within a subject area from all of the Excel campuses to meet and share their experiences. Recognizing the need for quality professional development, the leadership at The Excel Center has adapted the eight-week schedule to provide breaks between sessions for the staff to participate in further professional development. Other professional development opportunities include attendance at professional conferences and the majority of staff being trained in the Reading Apprenticeship (RAISE) model developed by WestEd. Trained staff members received 10 extensive days of training and have monthly on-going meetings with their cohort members across all sites. A cohort of new teachers will begin their training in the summer of 2014.

The Excel Center is already implementing the RISE evaluation program, and focus group interviews and discussions with school leaders revealed that the staff and leadership are happy with the frequency and content of the teacher evaluation system (indicator f).

*Areas of Strength:* The leadership has developed a very effective hiring process that has allowed them to hire a staff of dedicated and mission-driven instructors.

*Recommendations:* Staff lost to staff transfers and budgetary concerns should be replaced as soon as possible.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

Focus group interviews with staff, students, and leadership at each of the four sites evaluated revealed that all stakeholders in The Excel Center are knowledgeable and committed to the school's mission (indicators a & b). Interviews with stakeholders revealed that they fully understand and agree with The Excel Center mission to provide students who have found it difficult to finish their high school diploma with the opportunity to finish their diploma in an environment that is flexible and respectful of their needs, takes into consideration the stresses of work and family, and can accommodate students who need three credits to graduate as well as those who only have three credits completed.

When asked about the school mission, one member of the teaching staff summarized it as “serve high needs students and enhance the school community.... then students who have graduated put back that positive image into their community.”

The students at The Excel Centers are first exposed to the unique mission of the schools during iExcel. They noted that the introduction they receive is sometimes overwhelming but that in time, as they come to fully understand what is offered at The Excel Centers, they come to value this mission. As one student noted, “I got a little piece of what the experience is at iExcel--and the younger students got an idea of what they can and can't do...we learn to set goals and put deadlines on it, we have to put some urgency on it, and we have never done that before.”

*Areas of Strength:* The School Mission is compelling and reflects what is happening every day at The Excel Center. The teachers are fully committed to the school vision, and both teaching staff and school leadership are in agreement as to the vision of the school.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

## Meadows Street

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.</b>

The Excel Center leadership, staff and students have created an environment that fully supports and encourages the success of their students. Interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive, and most importantly, conducive to the success of each individual student. The student culture is one of hard work, support for each other, and a focus on the goal of the high school diploma. The students at The Excel Center are, for the most part, adults who are there by choice and they recognize that this is a unique opportunity to finish their education.

Essential to the school climate at the Meadows site, as well as to the other Excel Center sites, is the role of the Life Coaches. The teaching staff appreciates the role of the Coaches, noting that “they have the information about all the students—they come and go all day and check on every student.” The Coaches are particularly valuable during the “Productivity Meetings” that are held when a student is not progressing in their classwork as they should. During these meetings the student, the Coach, lead teachers, and Mr. Freeman meet to set goals to help the student improve. In this way, students who are struggling receive guidance to help them improve. It is the Coach's role in this process to provide the student with support and encouragement.

There is a common Code of Conduct in place at all Excel Center sites, with each Director given the leeway to adapt the implementation of the code to their specific needs. It is the Coaches' responsibility to ensure that the students understand the Code of Conduct and that they know what is acceptable and what is not (indicator a & b). The Code of Conduct has been rarely enforced, as noted by a Coach, “We have not had to use it yet... most issues are small and managed in the classroom.” The teaching staff also noted that “there is a core group of students who convey the culture to new students, they say “we don't do that here” (indicator c). The students also reported that they value the relationships that they have built with the teaching staff. One student described the teachers at the Excel Centers as “people who believe in her... people who give me that

empowerment. At the old school I felt stupid compared to everyone else, but here they break down the problems and help me work to get them right.”

Interactions between faculty and leadership at the Meadows are professional and constructive (indicator d). The teaching staff reported that Mr. Freeman is responsive to their needs and provides great leadership at the Meadows site. The students and the teaching staff both expressed that Mr. Freeman is integral to the success of The Excel Center Meadows site, with one student noting “Mr. Brent is the foundation of The Excel Center... he is always so positive and everything he does is so upbeat.” Another noted that “Everyday he (Mr. Freeman) builds a new bridge... this is my second family here. There are a lot of positive people who want to learn and get their education.”

*Areas of Strength:* The staff at The Excel Center-Meadows have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

## Franklin Road

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.</b>

The Excel Center-Franklin Road uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Franklin Road were observed to be respectful and supportive. The students noted that the Life Coaches were their advocates, stating that “they get to know everything about you—they are more like family... they help you to help yourself...whatever you bring to the table they will make sure you make it” (indicator c).

Interactions between the faculty and administration are professional and constructive at the Franklin Street Excel Center (indicator d). The teaching staff reports that they enjoy the work they do at The Excel Center-Franklin Street, with one teacher noting that “it never feels like a job... everyone is so flexible and good at what they do that it (the heavy workload) is manageable. We do a great job of finding time to do what needs to be done.” The staff also noted that they have planning days to work with each other on issues pertaining to their work. They also commended their Director, Shatoya Jordan, for her leadership style, saying “Shatoya is an open-door Principal—more leadership work happens when they all show up at her door” and also noting that “she is not a micromanager.”

*Areas of Strength:* The staff at The Excel Center-Franklin Road have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

## Decatur Boulevard

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.</b>

The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Decatur Boulevard were observed to be respectful and supportive. The students noted that “there are no behavior issues in the school.” During student interviews one student shared his story, one that is indicative of many of the students at all of The Excel Centers. He related, “When I was younger I moved around a lot so I was ahead in school, then behind, or whatever, because of all the moving around. I quit school and got a good job and was working at 17. Then I was downsized and never had a chance to go back to school. I wanted the high school diploma so I could go to college--do it the right way, no shortcuts. I looked at online courses but they didn't work because there was no way to get help if I needed it. Night classes were embarrassing—I didn't want to deal with the teenagers. I saw a commercial on TV and looked up The Excel Center. I started in February and had all those fears again—I didn't want to be judged too old. Turns out I am the second youngest in my class. Everyone is nice and no one is mean... if you need a ride to school and you talk to the coach, they come and get you. We all have everyone's back here...” This student is moving ahead with his diploma and is planning to take classes at Ivy Tech in the upcoming semester.

Interactions between faculty and The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard leadership is professional and constructive (indicator d). The teaching staff noted that they “feel like a family, and we work together well, and we make a difference.” They also noted that the unique student population at the Decatur Boulevard site makes it “fun to come to work.” The staff and students both expressed the importance of the leadership provided by the site Director, Mr. Clete Ladd. The teaching staff appreciated that Mr. Ladd goes beyond his role as site Director and engages directly with the

students, serving as an advisor to many students, stepping in and teaching a class and playing “an advisory role” in the life of the staff and the students.

*Areas of Strength:* The staff at The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

## Michigan Street

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.</b>

The Excel Center-Michigan Street uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Michigan Street were observed to be respectful and supportive. The students noted their relationship with the Life Coaches as being a particularly valuable aspect of the Michigan Street Excel Center. One student noted that “the best thing about The Excel Center are the coaches.” The teaching staff also views the Life Coaches as a valuable asset, noting that the Coaches are “a second voice to the student, and they reiterate what the teacher is saying... both of us come from a positive angle to help the student.” The staff also noted that “the students will prevent other students from dropping out; they will encourage them and will stop them from quitting...I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Much of the success of The Excel Center-Michigan Street is attributed by students and staff alike to the leadership of the site Director, Mr. Robert Moses. One staff member noted that “if I have a bad day, I can go to Mr. Moses and tell him how it is going and he will never close his door or judge me for my attitude.” Another noted that “he always looks at the whole picture... he is fair and supportive and always has our back.” Finally, another staff member noted that “he doesn’t micromanage; I have the freedom to breath.”

*Areas of Strength:* Staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

*Recommendations:* None at this time.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

The student population of The Excel Center is predominantly over 18, and there are very few whose parents are involved in their education, consequently this particular standard does not apply to The Excel Center as a whole.

<b>4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>one</u> or more of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.</b>

Excel Centers: Fall, 2013

Special Education Audit

Azure DS Angelov, Ph.D.

This report compiles a review of four Excel Center sites: Michigan Road, Decatur Blvd., Franklin Road, and the Meadows. All four sites have the same special education leadership, policies, and procedures in place. For the purposes of this report, all sites have been assigned one grade.

All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

The four Excel Center sites reviewed for this report are exceptional in the quality of special education services they are providing for students in their credit recovery programs. File audits revealed that all four sites are writing high quality and applicable IEPs (4.9a,b,c,d,e), have implemented a systemic 504 process, and are navigating external transition procedures with ease. Additionally, they have in place a strong RTI process and an added layer of transition support via life coaches, and all of their sites are ADA compliant. In many ways, The Excel Centers make running special education look easy, which is no small feat. Maintaining this level of service as The Excel Centers expand to other cities will be their best next opportunity to grow.

## Meadows Road

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Currently there are no ESL students enrolled at the Meadows location. An interview with Matthew Strain regarding the processes and procedures in place revealed that Mr. Strain is knowledgeable in the current legislation regarding the placement and education of ESL students. He expressed that he has received professional development in the area of ESL, and that he feels that the expertise and knowledge to implement best practices in ESL is available with the Goodwill Education Initiatives leadership.

## Franklin Road

<b>4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.</b>

Ms. Nicole Meyers is the ESL coordinator for The Excel Center-Franklin Road. Currently there are approximately 35 ESL students identified at Franklin Road. Ms. Meyers is very knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Meyers reported that she has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic.

Ms. Meyers is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Meyers employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Franklin Road is in compliance with these standards. Specifically, Franklin Road ESL students are initially self-identified based on their answers to the Home Language Survey. Once they have been identified, they are administered the CLAS-E TABE test, which identifies their level of proficiency. This testing occurs within the mandated 30 days. Students are placed into the appropriate courses, regardless of their language competency, using the same process applied to all of The Excel Center students at Franklin Road. Franklin Road students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services, and supports and services are provided to help with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a). Specific programs currently being used to educate the ESL students and provide remediation for them are System 44 and READ 180. Ms. Meyers reported that System 44 is particularly useful for their ESL students in that the online materials are differentiated for students with differing levels of language proficiency.

Ms. Meyers also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Meyers provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

## Decatur Boulevard

<b>4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.</b>

Ms. Quin Fratzke is the ESL coordinator for The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard. Ms. Fratzke is currently working toward her ESL certification with coursework and professional development. Ms. Fratzke is very knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Fratzke reported that she has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic.

Ms. Fratzke is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Fratzke employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Decatur Blvd. is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, notification of parents of the results of these tests, and their student's placement. Placement of ESL students is based on the grade level that is appropriate for their age rather than their language competency. Students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services and supports and services to help students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a). She is well-versed in the READ 180 and System 44 programs currently being used to remediate ESL students at The Excel Center sites.

Ms. Fratzke also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Fratzke provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

## Michigan Street

<b>4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</b>	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.</b>

Mr. Kevin Wiley is the ESL coordinator for the Michigan Street Excel Center. Mr. Wiley is knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students, and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Mr. Wiley reported that he has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL. Mr. Wiley has completed courses offered by the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic. He has also completed the professional development designed to enhance the use of READ 180 and System 44, both of which are being used to remediate ESL learners English language development (ELD) and academic knowledge.

Mr. Wiley is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mr. Wiley has employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Michigan Street is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, notification of parents of the results of these tests, and their student's placement. ESL students are placed in the grade level that is appropriate for their age rather than their language competency. Students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services and are provided supports and services to help students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a).

Mr. Wiley also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Mr. Wiley provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

## Appendix A: Excel Center-Summary of 4 Campuses

22 classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff at each site was observed once. Classroom observers spent 11 hour 7 minutes (667 minutes) observing 22 classrooms, 212 students, and 22 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30.3 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 9.6:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

### Classroom Environment

90.9 % (20/22) had posted objectives. 100% (22/22) had posted state standards. 95.4% (21/22) used critical vocabulary. 100% (22/22) had challenging content. 81.8% (18/22) exhibited differentiation. 0% (0/22) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

### Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 59.1% (13/22) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 59.1% (13/22) were Apply/Perform Activities. 31.8% (7/22) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0.0% (0/22) were Create/Design Activities. 0.0% (0/22) of activities were found to be ineffective.

22.7% (5/22) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 40.9% (9/22) showed examples of exemplary work. 90.9% (20/22) displayed a daily schedule. 22.7% (5/22) had posted behavior expectations. 72.7% (16/22) had culturally relevant materials.

### Site Visit Classroom Observations

Number of Site Visitors: 2

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
667	30.3

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
212	22	9.6

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Record ed	% Total	Recorded	% Total
Beginning of Lesson	14	63.6%	8	36.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
First Interval	14	63.6%	8	36.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	9	40.9%	13	59.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	12	54.5%	10	45.5%	8	53.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

## Appendix A: Excel Center-Meadows Road

Six classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 3 hour 2 minutes (182 minutes) observing 6 classrooms, 53 students, and 6 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30.1 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 8.8:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

### Classroom Environment

100 % (6/6) had posted objectives. 100% (6/6) had posted state standards. 100% (6/6) used critical vocabulary. 100% (6/6) had challenging content. 83.3% (5/6) exhibited differentiation. 0% (0/6) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

### Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 33.3% (2/6) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (6/6) were Apply/Perform Activities. 83.3% (5/6) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/6) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/6) of activities were found to be ineffective.

16.6% (1/6) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 33.3% (2/6) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (6/6) displayed a daily schedule. 0% (0/6) had posted behavior expectations. 100% (6/6) had culturally relevant materials.

### Site Visit Classroom Observations

Number of Site Visitors: 2

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
182	30.1

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
53	6	8.8

Topic of Lesson	
Algebra II	World Studies
ICP	American Studies
World Studies	Algebra IA

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Record ed	% Total	Recorded	% Total
Beginning of Lesson	4	66.6%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
First Interval	4	66.6%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	2	33.3%	4	66.6%	5	83.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

## Appendix A: Excel Center-Franklin Road

Six classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and over half of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 3 hour 5 minutes (185 minutes) observing 6 classrooms, 79 students, and 6 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30.2 minutes, and the observed student to teacher ratio was 13.2:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

### Classroom Environment

100 % (6/6) had posted objectives. 100% (6/6) had posted state standards. 100% (6/6) used critical vocabulary. 100% (6/6) had challenging content. 83.3% (5/6) exhibited differentiation. 0% (0/6) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

### Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 50.0% (3/6) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 66.6% (4/6) were Apply/Perform Activities. 16.6% (1/6) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/6) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/6) of activities were found to be ineffective.

40.0% (0/6) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 50.0% (3/6) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (6/6) displayed a daily schedule. 33.3% (2/6) had posted behavior expectations. 50.0% (3/6) had culturally relevant materials.

### Site Visit Classroom Observations

Number of Site Visitors: 2

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
185	30

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
79	6	13.2

Topic of Lesson	
World Studies	English 5
English 3	Algebra IA
Algebra IA	Biology

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
Beginning of Lesson	2	33.3%	4	66.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
First Interval	2	33.3%	4	66.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	1	16.6%	5	83.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	1	16.6%	5	83.3%	3	60.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

## Appendix A: Excel Center-Decatur Blvd.

Four classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 2 hour 2 minutes (122 minutes) observing 4 classrooms, 39 students, and 4 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 9.7:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

### Classroom Environment

75.0 % (3/4) had posted objectives. 100% (4/4) had posted state standards. 100% (4/4) used critical vocabulary. 100.0% (4/4) had challenging content. 50.0% (2/4) exhibited differentiation. 0% (0/4) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

### Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 75.0% (3/4) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 25.0% (1/4) were Apply/Perform Activities. 0.0% (0/4) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0.0% (0/4) were Create/Design Activities. 25.0% (1/4) of activities were found to be ineffective.

25.0% (1/4) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 25.0% (1/4) showed examples of exemplary work. 50.0% (2/4) displayed a daily schedule. 25.0% (1/4) had posted behavior expectations. 50.0% (2/4) had culturally relevant materials.

### Site Visit Classroom Observations

Number of Site Visitors: 2

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
39	30

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
39	4	9.7

Topic of Lesson	
Algebra	World Studies
Geometry	Biology

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
Beginning of Lesson	4	100%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
First Interval	4	100%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	4	83.3%	0	16.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

## Appendix A: Excel Center-Michigan Street

Six classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and almost all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 3 hours and 1 minute (181 minutes) observing 6 classrooms, 58 students, and 6 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 9.6:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

### Classroom Environment

83.3 % (5/6) had posted objectives. 100% (6/6) had posted state standards. 83.3% (5/6) used critical vocabulary. 100% (6/6) had challenging content. 100% (6/6) exhibited differentiation. 100.0% (6/6) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

### Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 83.3% (5/6) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 33.3% (2/6) were Apply/Perform Activities. 16.6% (1/6) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0.0% (0/6) were Create/Design Activities. 0.0% (0/6) of activities were found to be ineffective.

50.0% (3/6) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 50.0% (3/6) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (6/6) displayed a daily schedule. 33.3% (2/6) had posted behavior expectations. 83.3% (5/6) had culturally relevant materials.

### Site Visit Classroom Observations

Number of Site Visitors: 2

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
181	30

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
58	6	9.6

Topic of Lesson	
ICP	English 3
Algebra II	World Studies B
Algebra IB	English 6

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
Beginning of Lesson	4	66.6%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
First Interval	4	66.6%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	5	0.0%	1	40.0%	3	60.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%